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## POSSIBLE MARCH UPRISINGS IN THE NEAR EAST

According to a number of reports recently received from the Near East, serious uprisings are planned in the area for the latter part of March and will involve simultaneous Kurdish revolts in Syria, Iraq and Turkey. These reports, which cite details of time and place but cannot be evaluated at this time, indicate that Communist agitators are actively urging the Kurds to resort to violence and that the uprisings will be supported by the sabotage of military installations in Turkey, as well as the assassination of leading Arab government figures and possibly western representatives. Although the accuracy of these reports cannot be established, it is true that Kurdish uprisings are always a distinct possibility and that the Communists in the area can be expected to exploit this traditional unrest. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that either the Kurds or the Arab and Turkish Communists are receiving substantial material assistance from the USSR or that the USSR is planning any overt action on their behalf in the near future.

If the predicted uprisings occur, they will be generally unsuccessful in all three countries. The effects on each country, however, will vary. In Turkey, there is not the remotest possibility of a serious threat to the government. Communist activity in Turkey is almost non-existent, the Kurds there are less discontented, and the security services are more than adequate. In Iraq, disorders might spread rapidly and some changes in the government might result. The situation might be further complicated by the attempted return of the Barzani Kurds who fled to the USSR in 1947. Communist strength in Iraq has been seriously weakened by recent government action, however, and Iraqi troops now being returned from Palestine could prevent a successful revolution. In Syria, it is possible

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that the outbreak of disturbances might touch off a counter-revolt by ultra-nationalist elements under the leadership of Colonel Zaim, Chief of Staff of the Syrian Army. Zaim is reportedly planning such a move, which, if it took place, would probably be a quasi-legal seizure of power in which the present Constitution and President would be retained. Whether or not Zaim assumes power, however, Communist and Kurdish forces in Syria are too weak to make a successful bid for control of the government.

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